

Saturday Evening Post

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FLORABELLE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY ELIA WHEELER.

Did you see Florabelle? Has she passed this morning?
A tall, slender maiden, with hair like spun gold?
She has! then I pray you, sir, heed my warning.
It is just the old old-fashioned story was told.

Florabelle is a girl, a coquette, a deceiver.
She angles for hearts, with soft words and sweet smiles.
Favoured in favour, don't you trust her love!
Her heart is cold, her eyes are false, her soul is evil.

She has eyes like the heart of a blue morning glory.
She has lips like a rosebud just sprinkled with dew.
'Tis the old back-story tale: the same old story.
A woman all false, yet all false and untrue.

With her soft silver hair in its mother and tangles,
With her pink and white cheeks, and her red rosy lips,
With her eyes shining clear like the heaven's bright stars,
She has looked as strong hearts as the ocean has ships.

These blue eyes ever on watch for a stranger,
She thirsts for fresh conquests, and she has marked you;
I warn you, my friend, that your peace is in danger,
Take heed lest the day that you meet her you rue.

Don't look in her eyes for one moment, but leave her
Before you're entranced and find it too late;
Florabelle is a girl, a coquette, a deceiver,
I have given you warning, now choose your own fate.

THE SWAMP OUTLAWS;

OR,

A SECRET OF TWENTY YEARS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER I.

A CAPTURE.

The two from whom Solomon had become separated, had moved on slowly into the swamp, occasionally shooting some small game—forced in most cases to follow a single, narrow path, though in some localities the footing was firm enough to permit of a wide, open, and level surface. On one of these spots, of larger extent than usual, they became considerably separated, being attracted in opposite directions by indications of game. Howard's route led him to the entrance of a narrow path, which had evidently been lately trodden by some large animal, though the peculiar character of the surface prevented the impressions being sufficiently marked for his skill in woodcraft to enable him to declare what creature had made them.

Calling to Du Bar to follow, he plunged excitedly into the path, thoughtful of danger, animated solely by the instinct of pursuit. The track wound in many intricate bands, through a dense thicket of vegetation, thick and in the luxuriance. The air was moist, hot, and oppressively close, so that after ten minutes traversing of the path, as rapidly as the yielding surface would permit, he was forced to pause and proceed more slowly, gasping for breath from his exertions in so oppressive an atmosphere.

After a few moments more he emerged from the narrow path into a more open and dryer space. Here he stopped to regain breath. As he stood there, surrounded by a dense wall of vegetation, which was utterly destitute of any indication of life or motion, and awful in its monotonous stillness, a sudden sense of isolation, that was almost terror, came upon him. It seemed to his excited imagination as if he was in the heart of a Cretaceous forest, the side branching crevices in a world of vegetation. The sense of helplessness, of utter isolation from the whole human race, grew rapidly more overpowering, till in one of those unreasoning panics to which all men are at times liable, he dropped his weapon, and was on the point of rushing in a paroxysm of terror from the scene.

At this instant the breaking of a dry branch struck sharply upon his excited senses. He turned hastily towards the sound, in time to catch a glimpse of a man with levelled rifle. Simultaneously with the flash was the sensation of a terrible blow upon his head, and he fell prostrate and insensible, half buried in the thick grass.

As Solomon broke upon the scene of the attempted assassination, and started the outlaw from his prey, he wondered, completed by his mind with his fallen friend, as the rank he had just heard through the bushes, as of some one creeping in terror from the scene of murder. With the thought came the apparent solution, that it was Du Bar, who, in cowardly flight, had deserted his friend at the moment of danger.

He hastily made the round of the narrow space, peering keenly through the bushes, but no person was visible in the short distance to which light could penetrate. "Watch 'em, Flash," he said to the dog, who had stationed himself in an attitude of attention at the entrance of a path near that by which Howard had come.

The animal pricked up his ears, emitted a low bark, and hastily turned and round the open space, penetrating every opening that appeared, and finally returned to his selected station, where he seated himself with the dignity of an appointed sentinel.

Turning now to his injured friend, Solomon in a few moments looked him round on one eye, and rubbing his head in a nervous, bewildered manner, as of one dizzy from the effects of a blow.

In fact, his quick movement in turning, and a slight stoop he had made at the same time, had saved his life. The bullet had

simply grazed his skull, scoring his head in its passage, and temporarily affecting his brain by the sharp concussion, but doing no serious injury. Solomon helped him to his feet, bathed the injured place with cool water from a small spring that bubbled near them, and after a few moments Howard had almost entirely recovered; only a slight dizziness and the trifling pain of the wound remaining in evidence of the danger he had passed.

"Are you fit to walk now?" Solomon anxiously inquired. "It's risky ground we're on, or I'm certainly not hurry you."

"As sound as ever," replied Howard.

"This dizziness will soon pass off, and does not affect me seriously now." "Here is your gun, then, maybe you'll want it. And, by—, the brand's drop his rifle. A good piece too," he continued, closely examining it. "I observed him, sure enough. We've got all we want to carry without it, but I don't want to leave our spoils for the enemy, so I'll just hide it in the bush somewhere out of sight." Proceeding a few steps down the narrow path by which Howard had come, he hid the weapon in the hollow of an ancient cypress that stood beside the path.

"Now how to get back to our boat. I expect Du Bar'll be there ahead of us, for I heard him runnin' like mad. I hope the blasted coward will not run off with the skin."

"I came by that path," said Howard, pointing.

"What kind of a track was it?"

"Very narrow and crooked."

"This 'un looks to run the same way, and looks wider and straighter. Besides that, the dog's picked it out, so I think we'd better try it, a distance anyhow."

"Very well, I trust to your experience."

"Experience! I haven't a mile of it. Nor judgment neither. But the dog's got dog sense, an' that's better than man sense just now."

The path they had entered was wider than the other and seemed well trodden, the bottom being comparatively dry. Five minutes' rapid walking brought them into a wide open space, which Howard immediately recognized as the spot on which he had parted from Du Bar.

From this point he had a pretty clear conception of the route by which they had come, and they trod steadily on with better assurance of their direction.

At length, by certain landmarks which he recognized, Howard knew that they were near the spot at which their first game had been brought down, and where Solomon had parted from the company.

A low whine from the dog arrested their steps at this point. The animal, a short distance in advance, stood motionless as a statue, his eyes fixed on some object ahead, his teeth tightly displayed.

"Quiet, Flash, watch 'em, boy, watch 'em," said Solomon, in a low voice. "He sees game, Mr. Howard, an' it's not our turn to hurry him. Wait till I've a squint ahead."

Cautiously advancing, he looked over the dog's shoulder. A single glance sufficed. Standing beside a tree on the edge of the clearing next them, stood the man whom Solomon had lately seen, knife in hand, bending over the prostrate body of his friend.

"There's game," he whispered, "that's better than bear. Shall we take him?"

"If we can," answered Howard in the same tone.

care, the spangly, springing soft drowsing every sound, so that his advance was utterly unnoticed.

Reaching the edge of the bushes he peered carefully out. The outlaw still stood with his back toward them, unaware of their approach. His eyes were fixed on some object on the ground that seemed closely to arrest his attention.

The tree, a huge-trunked oak, stood almost in a right line between the two, and by a slight movement to the left Solomon brought it directly between, so that he was enabled to advance under cover of its trunk.

A dozen noiseless steps placed him in this point of vantage. Gazing round the great trunk with the utmost caution, he saw the outlaw, almost within reach of his hand, with his eyes still fixed on the ground before him.

Solomon brooded his muscles for the leap, and was just on the point of springing on his foe, when the latter with a hasty step forward struck viciously with his heel at some object hidden in the grass from the vision of his keen observer.

"That's one rattler gone under, for sure," said the outlaw, with a hoarse, loud laugh.

The sudden movement and his voice excited the dog, so that, fiercely barking, he rushed forward. The outlaw turned and, with a violent kick, sent the attempted spring of the animal, and sent it howling several feet from him.

At the same instant he caught a glimpse of Howard, standing at the entrance of the path, the rifle at his shoulder, and his eye ranging along the sights, covering him from the side.

He crouched back involuntarily, with a shrinking, trembling movement, as of one who sees a ghost, evidently affected with the momentary notion that this was the spirit of his victim.

"Move one step, and you are a dead man!" cried Howard.

At the same instant, with the leap of a panther, Solomon sprang from his concealment, and grasping the man in his sinewy arms, held him furiously to the ground.

The attack was so sudden that he had no time for resistance, and though he struggled violently the next moment, he was held at such a disadvantage that his efforts were all in vain.

"Put a bullet through his head if he don't give in," cried Solomon. "Let me have the bit of time in your coat pocket."

Mr. Howard threw him a piece of strong cord, with which he proceeded frantically to bind his prisoner's arms, the latter ceasing to struggle now that he saw the muzzle of the rifle within a foot of his head.

But what he lacked in movement he made up in speech, cursing with a virulence, and a wonderful command of the vocabulary of expletives, that almost made the listeners' hair stand on end.

"Rant your dog mouth, or as I'm a livin' man I'll set the dog on you!" said Solomon, tightening the cords as he spoke, and forcing the outlaw to rise on his feet.

"Well, yer got me fast, durn ye!" said the prisoner. "But yer can't make me jog a step. An' yer in a hornet's nest yerself, mind ye. See that dead rattler!" Sparring the crushed rattlesnake with his foot. "Ye'll be woe nor that afore ye get outter this. An' Jim Budd's not the man to brag."

"We'll see if there ain't some indocement for Jim Budd to move," said Solomon coolly, cutting an elastic sapling as he spoke, and fashioning it into a switch. "Now, my man, if yer log a step yer'll get this across your head an' shoulders, and mind yer'll not be playin' if I try it on. Now git."

Solomon followed, holding an end of the cord that bound his arms.

"Keep your eye on the sights, Mr. Howard," he said. "An' if he makes a jump for it, shoot him down as you would a dog."

"I know yer, Sol," said the man, viciously. "I'll be my own art."

"As soon as you please. But I'll lead you in jail fast, an' if they don't hang you it's a caution."

They continued thus for about a mile, the outlaw glancing nervously from side to side, as if hoping for rescue. At one point he put his hand to his mouth and emitted a shrill whistle, but it was cut short by his watchful keeper, who struck him a nerve blow in the mouth that suddenly brought his signal to an end.

"Try that on again, yer infernal hound, an' I'll leave them your dead carcass. If you think to fool your time with Sol Buddle I'll shoot you as quick as I'd shoot a snake."

And his resolute tone plainly told the outlaw that any further resistance would be dangerous.

In a short time after, they emerged upon the small open space at which they had left their boat.

Sitting here upon the trunk of a fallen tree they beheld Du Bar apparently waiting for them.

He started and gazed at the approaching party with utter astonishment, his wondering looks alternating between Howard and the prisoner, as if at a loss to account for the appearance of either.

"What does this mean?" he at length ejaculated.

"It means that we have found larger and wilder game than we expected," said Howard, "a species of wild beast that infests this swamp, but is not often captured."

"You're right there," said Solomon, "neither soon nor hear this time. But a Budd is a wilder beast than any bear of them all."

A glance of recognition passed, unseen by the others, between Du Bar and the prisoner. Drawing out the boat from its concealment, Solomon made his prisoner enter it.

He forced him to sit on the bottom of the boat near the stern, and tied the free end of the cord to the bottom in such a way that he could not possibly escape.

"Now, look, we've got to lay down to it," said Solomon, taking one pair of oars, and directing Du Bar to take the other, while Howard sat in the bow, with his weapon ready, and glancing keenly ahead, both to guard against danger and to direct the rowers.

The latter bent vigorously to their oars, and made the boat spin with their efforts. In a moment they had entered the wide pond already mentioned, and darting across it, emerged in the main bed of the creek.

CHAPTER II.

THE ESCAPE.

"Now, gentle, we've got to make a break for it," said Solomon. "It's dangerous quarters we're in, an' I've my notion that maybe this fellow's whistle has waked the horrets."

Low heavy on your ears, sir; and you, Mr. Howard, keep both eyes open. We're not out of the swamp yet, that we was focus over to come in."

"I don't apprehend any danger," said Du Bar. "It is no great distance from here to the dry land, and we will soon shoot our way out."

"Maybe you don't," replied Solomon, coolly. "There wasn't a mile of danger in the whole swamp, according to you; yet I rather think we found some. You got me here, now let's see what you can do towards getting us out."

The boat during this conversation had been allowed to drift with the force of the impetuous already given to it. They now applied themselves again to the oars and drove the skiff swiftly down the stream.

After five minutes' rowing through a bordering thicket of unusual density, they were startled by a long, low, quivering whistle that broke upon the air, seemingly from a considerable distance to the left. Like an echo, sounded a shrill reply to it from their very feet.

"A signal, by all that's stupid!" cried Solomon, leaping to his feet. "An' I've been fool enough to let this dog go un-muzzled."

The outlaw laughed, a coarse, snarling laugh, that was suddenly checked by a huge bunch of reeds, which his captor thrust into his mouth as a gag.

"It's a chance now if we don't have a brush. I reckon the wretches will be ambushed for us. Mr. Du Bar, you'll have to strain your wrists for the next ten minutes, as I doubt but it'll be a close shave."

The boat now shot forward with redoubled speed under their vigorous use of the oars. They were both good rowers, and with their utmost skill and strength, Howard stood upright in the bow, his rifle ready for instant use, and straining his eyes vigilantly ahead.

Thus for some ten minutes they proceeded, and had made good progress towards their point of emergence from the thicket, when their hitherto almost sentinel signalled for them to stop rowing.

"Stop her headway," he said, peering forward anxiously for a full minute without another word.

"There is something wrong at the point ahead of us; there where the creek bends; but I can't quite make it out. I am sure I saw a man's head for a moment outside the screen of bushes, but it instantly disappeared."

"Drop a bullet in the spot," said Solomon. "I trap that'll maybe stir them out of their holes."

The words were scarce out of his lips before Howard had levelled his rifle and fired. Instantly a man leaped into full view on the point in question; then as suddenly disappeared.

"You scotched him then, for sure," laughed Solomon. "The fellow was hit, but I reckon not hard. But, lads, this is a ticklish game we're playin'. They're a regular ambush there, and I'll sweep us if we try to pass it."

"We had better take to the swamp," said Howard. "They will have us entirely at their mercy if we attempt to row past."

"Merry! They don't know such a word. But the day is just this. Here we've been hunting all day, and caught one fine bird, without feathers, alive. Now it's agin the grain with me to let him off. Isn't there no way to fetch him in?"

"Not that I can see," said Du Bar. "We can't pass that point in the boat, that is settled. If we took him ashore they would have too much advantage of us with such a burden on our hands."

"And if we let him go he will be one more added to the number of our foes, and a villainous one, judging from what we know of him."

"Yet what are we to do? We can't shoot him or throw him overboard. He is going to prove a white elephant on our hands."

"I'm goin' to make a stroke for it, anyhow," said Solomon. "Look here, the current is running down pretty strong just now. Now if we set the boat adrift, I think it'll keep the middle. Our game'll be to trudge down just back of the bushes on the bank, and keep an eye on the boat. They are thinner back there, and we can easy make our way."

"Just by takin' 'tuther side of the creek. They won't try to come to our face, and if they think to swim out to the boat just let them try it on. If things work right we can bring in our prisoner yet."

"An' excellent plan," said Howard. "If there should not prove too many obstacles in the way. At all events, it is the best thing afloat, and we will try it. Back her a little, lads, in a good landing place."

As the boat commenced to move slowly backward, the embanked foe gave a shout of derision, and displayed themselves to the number of four men on the point.

The boat did not make a small error, out of sight from their position, and they instantly disappeared as if to make their way back behind the bordering reeds.

Instantly trying his prisoner's cables, so as to render him unable to escape, Solomon followed the others ashore, and gave the boat a push that sent it to the center of the current, where it began to drift slowly downstream.

They at once presented the bushes, as it were, to the boat, and the boatmen, having to make vigorous use of their hands in doing so. They found the ground here somewhat dryer than usual, it being drained by the watercourse. The bushes were not so thick, but low, and they found a difficulty in keeping pace with the boat in their onward progress, the dog taking the lead.

The movement was very slow, and for several minutes they trudged onwards, without hearing or seeing anything of the enemy, who, as they conjectured, were waiting to strike the moment of their new departure before detecting himself.

Suddenly the outlaws seemed to have discovered the object in the bottom of the boat, and signalled their discovery by a loud yell of anger. The boat was at that instant rounding the point on which the embankment had been made, and as it moved close to the shore, one of the outlaws, a full-blooded negro, leaped into the water and reached forward to grasp it as it approached. A bullet from the side of the boat struck Solomon whistling in close proximity to his ear, and he swung himself back into the grove with a hallooing bark, the boat quickly swinging out again into deep water. For ten minutes more the shore progressed continued without a visible movement on the part of the outlaws. They were now within a mile of the open country, and the boat slowly but steadily drifting onward, in the very centre of the stream. It passed at length under the branches of large trees that far overhung the creek. As it did so something was seen to fall from an overhanging branch, striking in the stern of the boat, very near the position in which they had left the bound man.

Their eyes were instantly directed upon the link, but nothing was visible, though Flash set up a furious barking, as if meaning game. It was a massive branch, sufficiently so to hide the form of a man, being screened also with thick leaves. No movement was visible in any part of the tree, and they were turning away when they saw a man leap into the bushes on the other side of the trunk. He had descended the tree so skillfully as to entirely escape their scrutiny.

"What can it mean?" said Howard. "There is some scheme hidden behind this, but I can't understand it."

"It means, in my notion," replied Solomon, "that they've dropped him a knife. But it's little good it'll do him, except it drops mighty near his hands, as that's a skin chase in a million."

"Not one in a million," said Du Bar. "But the millionth may win," replied Howard. "We will have to keep a sharp eye upon the boat, and if we see any movement remind him of our disapproval by a shot."

From the moment of this incident the foe entirely disappeared from the other side of the water. Solomon kept a vigilant watch upon the bushes, occasionally ascending the bank and searching the opposite shore with all his powers of vision; but in vain, no trace of a human being could be seen.

"I dread but they've left the shore," he said, after one of these efforts.

"No much the better," said Du Bar. "They have given it up as a useless task, and we can make the rest of our way in safety."

"Not a bit of it," replied Solomon. "It's a dangerous sign. There's not the fellow to give up so easy. This is how I look on it. They don't see a chance of doing anything more for the bound in the boat while we've an eye on them. An' they're goin' to cross the creek above, and come down on us on this side."

"And what had we better do?" said Howard. "Fall back into the woods and leave the boat to its chances?"

"I don't want to lose my game," said Solomon. "After a day's steady huntin' it won't pay to come in empty-handed. I vote that we catch the boat again, and row out. They're reckoning that we won't aim them, and I'll keep on here like fools till they strike us from behind. I'm in for takin' the boat."

"You will have to swim for it then," said Du Bar.

"There is a point just below, where the creek sweeps to our side," said Howard. "It will come near shore there, and we may be able to draw it in from the bank."

"That's the idea precisely," said Solomon, hurrying forward to the point.

This movement took of their attention from the boat for a brief space, during which period the outlaws made several rapid movements, unobserved by them.

In a minute's time they reached the point, towards which the boat slowly neared. Solomon looked curiously into it as it approached.

"Hallo!" he suddenly cried. "What's this? I'll be blasted if it ain't empty!"

The others rushed up, and saw to their extreme surprise that he was correct. Where the prisoner had lain there was only a small heap of the cord with which he had been bound, and an open knife.

"It was a knife then they dropped him," said Howard. "And he has cut himself."

"But how are we to pass the outlaws?"

every instance; just such men, as it is a pleasure
to business with. We cheerfully recommend
those wishing to make their wants known.

MY PATIENT.

BY J. M. MALONE.

One wild, bleak November night, in the
er of our Lord one thousand eight hun-
dred and forty-eight—after a fatiguing
day of professional labor, I sat, comfortably
wired and slipped, before a bright glow-
ing fire in our little sitting-room, mentally
comparing my present cozy situation with
the driving storm of snow and wind with-
out, and anon listening to the pleasant chat-
ing of my pettie wife, Theresa, who sat
beside me.

"Julius," she murmured abruptly and, advancing, she in the midst of a little bit of nonsense that she was rehearsing, and turning her head in a listening attitude towards the rattling shutters, "how awfully mournfully the wind sobs and rumbles in the street, and how violently it comes sweeping against the house!" And with a slight shiver she smoothed up close to my side, and she silently for some moments intently regarding the blighting fire.

"It does indeed rumble and sob dreadfully," I replied; "but then here and there, I do not mind it."

"I was thinking, Julius, what if you had gone out to-night!" she softly said, looking at me.

"Oh, I do hope not," she said. And she
id to chattering again, as gaily as ever.
But hardly had she begun, and our little
pleasant interruption been forgotten,
when there came a sudden, violent jolting of
the wheels.

"There!" one pettishly broke off, "there! I saw they would come and take my Julia into the street."

I laughingly bled her, and went to answer the summons myself. My welcome was proved to be a boy—a rugged, beggar-looking fellow, who, in a few brief words, informed me that I was wanted forthwith professionally at the house of a poor scholar in the western suburb at the city, the man's wife being both violently and dangerously ill. And he gave me minute directions of how to find the place.

As I went to leave my cheerful friends I felt the fierce bitterness of the storm about which, as the night grew on in its raging, grew fiercer and fiercer with it; the call was an imminent one, and one I could be neither ignored nor postponed; and keenly alive to this fact I returned to the sitting-room, where, with the aid of my precious little *Theresa*, I unobtrusively exchanged my light gown and slippers for a heavy coat and boots, preparatory to setting out.

The distance was but short, I could not make any way on foot to the brother-in-law's; and after tenderly blessing my wife, I bidded her not sit up and await my arm, I sought the stately street.

The night was indeed a disagreeable one, ere I had gone forth I had but a faint conception of how bad it really was. The snow as it fell was drifted up in great piles on the narrow sidewalks, at once presenting a barrier both formidable and dangerous; the sharp, pitiless wind dashed

ity along the open streets, shrieking and howling defiantly among house-tops and windows, surging with terrible force against us and rattling shutters, and emitting a blinding snow in every conceivable direction; while the pale, ghastly glare of the staring street lamps shone like quivering stars in an unquiet, dusky sky.

Nevertheless, when once started, I made my good headway, and after passing through a number of long, irregular streets as many dark, winding alleys, so narrow that the drifting snow could barely effect an advance, I found myself without the limits of the city. This I could very readily divine, for here all at once the street that I was traversing took the character of a mud-pike, and wound its black, serpentine run irregularly through the broad, open common that stretched itself away for

before me; the houses, quaint, dilapidated looking structures, were but few and far between, and started suddenly and frowning up in the midst of that great plain of snow, like gaunt black monsters of the black, storming night; while the cold, grimaced sky, in its leaden bearing and its dismal howl, which had hitherto been revealed to me only in thin, narrow streaks as it stared spitefully down at the slushy streets, was now plainly visible throughout its whole wild and stormy front.

thing I've hit an instant to assure me that I had implicitly followed my director's instructions—that I had not mindlessly wandered from my way—I carefully singled out from a motley cluster of men, some hundred yards before me, a tall, reticent-looking cot, as the one whitest in the group. It was a very small and delicate cot, so I found upon coming up to it—standing alone in an open and unprotected place upon the bleak common, and totally isolated from its many surrounding neighbors. The walls were low and crumbling, and

yawning crevices gaped at every little
 oval, as though the very logs had shrunk
 contracted in the pitiless cold of that
 cold night, and were covering together
 warmth and for comfort. There were
 signs of life about the shapeless hovel,
 a pale, yellow light that came in
 barred floods through every crack and
 noy, and fell like quivering, ghostly
 ow upon the snow at my feet.
 rounding the small, uneven yard, I paused
 the battered door and rapped. No re-

me, I rapped again—louder. This aroused my immediate proximity into motion. For directly I heard a low, shuffling step within—then the heavy slouching footsteps of a man dragging slowly across the floor, and then the iron clink and rattle of a gun at the door.

"Well, what brings you here to-night?" a voice abruptly greeted me.

The man who had just spoken, and stood squarely in the aperture formed by the opening of the door, holding high in his hand a glaring tallow candle, was a middle-aged appearance, thin and bony, with a high forehead, a straight nose, bright eyes, and a small, pointed beard.

He looked at once distinguished him as a man of toil. In the very uncertain light illumined by his face looked pale

fronted beard, fell refractorily over his head and about his shoulders; while his red and fiery-looking, gleamed at me beneath a pair of shaggy brows with age, wild, irregular light.

man Grey—yes," he confirmed, eyeing
with a sort of uneasy air.
thought so," I observed. "I was re-
solved to call here—"
Oh, you are the doctor, then? Ooms
And he moved to one side, and thrust
door further open, thus allowing me
for entrance.

There was a dark, shimmering fire—a more beautiful—upon the broad hearth; and at a motion from the man, I went up and stood near it. He, however, passed for a moment at the door to refuel the grate, and for this purpose used the sharp shining steel that I had heard whilst waiting with-out. Then he came up, and depositing the shining candle upon a low stool, stood be-side me.

While he was doing this, I was busily engaged in surveying the bare and shabby room into which I had been so unceremoniously ushered. The whole interior was black and smoke-begrimed, and presented a very unattractive and unbecoming appearance. In one corner, near the broad fireplace, were prominently placed a number of cooking utensils, wearing the same rusty coat that marked the rest and the walls, bare walls, directly above these rose a rude cupboard, no doubt fashioned and framed by the unskilful hands of the owner of the dilapidated cot; while upon the other side of the room were a rough, undressed table, a low stool, and a few rickety chairs, that, judging from their condition, must have seen service in the lifetime of Jean Grey's great grandfather. In a remote angle of the hall, where the unobtrusive crevices gaped the broadest and took in the greatest share of the cold, bitter night, stood a low, old-fashioned bedstead, curiously carved, and covered with a worn and tattered blanket.

This latter article complemented the homely furniture, and in it reclined the sick woman, I supposed. For my eye at once detected an unusual look of prostration beneath the dirty blanket, which bore the shape and semblance of a human body.

"She's a sleep now," said the man, eyeing me and then eyeing the bulk beneath the tattered blanket which I was also closely looking at. "She's asleep now, but will awaken by-and-by."

He turned around as he spoke, and taking a red iron poker from the hearth vigorously stirred up the sinking, dismal fire, but without producing much effect. Then he brought up a couple of the hideously creaking chairs, and seating himself upon one, directed me with a slight wave of his hand to the other.

"Has she been ill for some time?" I softly asked, taking the seat proffered me.

"For some time," he reiterated, as though asking himself the question. "For some time?"

"Yes," I said.

"For a long time," he slowly rejoined, looking moodily into the glowing embers, "though not down. She took down only three days ago."

"Ah!" I ejaculated. "Yet you have had medical attendance for her ever this?"

"I bought some medicines yesterday," he gruffly returned.

"And fire surely you have had no more than this handful of fire?"

"How could I?" he cried almost fiercely, turning his red, gleaming eyes full upon me, and contorting his ghastly face into a ghastly smile by long and incessant washing—until it was rendered perfectly hideous in the glaring light. "I could not go out and work; I have been compelled to sit here day and night by Annette's side; all our little savings I was forced to spend for food and medicine for her. How could I?"

"But surely," I urged in conciliatory tones, looking with compassion upon the poor wretch—"there are those in this great christian city who would willingly have secured you had they but been apprised."

"In this great christian city?" he bitterly repeated, a smile of contempt wreathing his white lips. "Yes, yes, perhaps so. But then we did not care to ask. Annette was warmly wrapped in bed, and as to myself I did not care."

Then he bent lower over the smouldering embers, and set for some moments evidently engrossed in deep study.

"We had determined on going to the country—Annette and I, when spring came, he said, some day, in a low, moaning tone, after fall a minute of protracted silence. "But she is so very ill now, and as we have been forced to spend all our little savings, it will be longer."

"To the country," I replied, thinking of nothing else to say just then.

He nodded affirmatively and said, "You have been there?"

"Frequently," I told him, my curiosity suddenly excited at the strange manner in which the man rambled on.

"I never have," he pursued in the same moaning strain. "Annette has been there though. She has seen the best of the green fields, and the waving forests, and the plashing, sparkling rivers. Annette was born there."

Here he fell into another reverie which lasted a long time. In fact, until I had become utterly impatient, and being greatly oppressed by the stinging cold, and the general languor that it produced, I impatiently demanded to see Annette.

"She's asleep now," he said again. "We will not awake her yet. O, how impatiently, arising to my feet. From her sound and unbroken slumbers I infer that she is out of all present danger, and will not require my immediate attention further. I can very easily ascertain if this be the case without awakening her."

He somewhat reluctantly yielded to my request, and leading the way to the filthy bed-side he threw back the dirty, tattered blanket.

"How sweetly Annette is sleeping," he said. "Maybe you see her as dreaming of the beautiful country whither we are going by-and-by."

The face revealed to me was evidently that of a woman, and though not a very old one, was withered, and shrunken, and gleamingly the neck, to this and cold and white, displayed two rows of tightly-set, hideously-gleaming teeth; and the great black, expressive eyes, bearing such a marked contrast to the pale, white face, were opened to their widest extent, and were staring up with a dull, leaden stare.

I pressed my hand upon the white face. It was cold and icy to my touch. I bent my ear to catch a breath—a sound. Not the faintest sound did the gleaming lips. And I knew that Annette had gone to the country.

"She is dead!" I cried, looking with pity upon the man's face.

"Dead!" he hoarsely echoed, looking im-petuously into the face. "Oh, no; you mistake! Annette is not dead—she is only sleeping."

Though with a shudder I turned to the bedside, she apparently regarded him for a moment. A strange idea had suddenly crept into my brain.

He bent over the iron frame and took one of the still hands in his own, and said, "She will be better when she awakes," he said, "she has been sleeping so quietly for hours!"

At once the idea that I had caught up was confirmed into an indisputable, astounding truth; and at the same time the man's wild, gleaming eyes, and the ghastly smile, seemed to me. In a word, he was a madman, and the death of his wife, which it was plainly evident had happened some hours previous, had wrought so strongly upon him as to com-plete his derangement.

"I was with her this morning when she fell asleep so quietly," he pursued, rubbing the cold hands, "and she came and sat down in my arm, and she was dead! But I would not believe the fool thing. Now you can see and hear that she is not!"

He then bent down and took up the cold, gleaming eyes, which had suddenly opened a wider and deeper expression. My first thought, upon recovering from

the commotion into which I had been thrown by this appalling discovery, was to get him quieted, and to shade as much as possible the cerebral discomposure that was rapidly growing upon him. And to do this I was alive to the fact that it was essentially necessary to draw him away at once from the medical cause or producing element of this great nervous stroke.

"Come, let her sleep then," I said, thinking to humor his morbid fancy.

"Listen!" he exclaimed in a whisper, bending his ear listening towards the door, and not the most remotely heeding my solicitation.

"The nothing but the wind," I urged.

"The nothing but the wind," I urged, and having and shrieking along, that had aroused him.

"Not the wind, but demons!" he cried in a low, startled tone, his disorder fully de-veloped. "There are legions of them! Listen how fiercely they press upon one another; how they howl and shriek and sob; how they surge and rattle at the door! Ha! they're trying to enter! They're trying to force their way in to my poor Annette! He stood panting and trembling over her, holding the poor, dead, without thing in his arms, his glowing eyes emitting sparks of almost living fire.

"The nothing but the wind and the storm, poor man," I said. "Come away, and we will talk more of Annette and of the beau-tiful country whither you are going by-and-by."

I moved up to his side as I spoke, and laying one hand quietly upon his arm, with the other I strove to disengage the icy body from his iron grasp.

"Away!" he shrieked, turning upon me with a look of rage. "Would you steal her from me?"

"No, I would not take her from you," I said. "No one shall do that."

Uttering another furious howl he shook off my hand; then he drew the cold, shivering body up to an erect, sitting posture beside him.

The white face, the mocking lips, and the staring eyes of the dead woman piercing out from the dark, with not much less ghastly visage of the man, was not only mockingly farcical in itself, but truly dis-gusting; and unwilling longer to endure the sight, I walked boldly up, and succeeded in drawing him away. This accomplished, I proceeded to arrange in a more decent and becoming condition the corpse, which yet sat erect, upheld by the low head-board of the bedstead. But hardly had my hands touched it, when, with a hoarse and spring, the infuriated madman darted upon me from behind, and with all his united strength, hurled me headlong to the further side of the cot.

Though slightly stunned, I quickly rose to my feet, and turned to meet him. For he was now slowly advancing upon me, his eyes gleaming with terrible brilliancy.

However, even with the assault he had made, I did not regard my situation as a perilous one; for I believed that his tur-bulent paroxysm could not last long, and that by judicious reasoning, and it was with such, and without the least thought of force, that I turned to receive him.

"You do not know me, Jean Grey?" I asked, holding out my hand toward him.

"Know you, Jean?" he shrieked, coming to a sudden pause a few feet away from me.

"Away! away! away!" And he waved his long arm threateningly above his head.

"I am your friend, Jean—the doctor," I continued.

"You are leagues with the demons! you are one of them!" he cried in a hoarse whisper.

"No."

"Curses you!" he screamed, and he lunged at my throat.

So entirely unexpected and so precipitate was his spring, that I had not time to gra-tulate myself on his massive strength before he had thrown me to the ground. Then he planted his knees firmly upon my breast, and fast-ened his iron, vice-like gripe upon my throat.

"Would you murder me, Jean Grey?" I shrieked in a low, stifled voice, as I felt there perfectly powerless to the madman's will.

A wild laugh, sounding more like the howl of an infuriated demon, was the only answer he gave me.

His hot, labored breath poured thick and hot upon my flushed and burning cheek; his red, gleaming eyes, which now shone out of mazy shadows, peered narrowly and fiercely down into mine, while his hand, ex-ercising my throat, seemed like a coiling serpent of fire, slowly and by degrees con-tracting and strangling me fearfully. Above me for us lay near the bedstead, and the right, ghastly corpse of the woman, glaring down upon us with the stony, leaden stare of death, and grinning horribly at us with her shrivelled lips and her gleaming teeth, that in the dusky light bore such a strange, spectral whiteness.

In that terrible moment I closed my eyes, thinking that death was upon me. But some-how the thought acted as a stimulant, passing through my brain and nerves like some great electric shock, and serving to arouse me from the lethargic stupor into which I was fast sinking. And then commenced a ter-rible struggle between us—a struggle for life or death.

With superhuman effort I tore loose his grasp from my throat, and linking my arms firmly about him, we rolled over and over on the rough, uneven floor. My brain was turning, whirling, and felt all on fire. My eyes seemed starting from their sockets; and for the moment I thought that I was mad too. At least I had all the strength and fierceness of a maniac, for I fought as wildly and as madly as he.

Up and down, first upon our feet, then upon our knees, then upon the floor, we strove and tugged, neither the one nor the other having the mastery. Sometimes we would pause to regain our shortened breath, and we would stand and glare balefully at each other; but upon the next instant, as if by mutual consent, the contest was fiercely renewed.

It must have lasted thus full five minutes, when, just as we had again commenced our full length upon the floor, as if entirely overcome, or as though some paralyzing stroke had suddenly seized him, he relaxed his grasp, and I, being alone, easily sprang away from him, and to my feet.

He, however, did not rise, and directly I went and knelt down beside him to see if he was in any manner injured. His eyes were closed, his teeth tightly clenched, and his respiration was short and heavy.

I quickly raised him from the floor, and seated him upon a chair near the fireplace, and he was utterly powerless now, and it was a long time before he opened his eyes, when I saw at a glance that they were very dull, and that their fire, like that fed by the vegetable substance upon the hearth, was nearly gone out.

"Annette, Annette!" I heard him softly murmur. "We are going to—the coun-try—to—"

A slight shiver passed through his frame; his eyes closed again; and his head sank heavily forward upon his breast. He had gone to the country, and with Annette. He had gone to the country even while it was far off from the cheerful spring-time; but it was to a country far away, where winter never comes—where fields are ever soft and green; where plashing, sparkling rivers and waving forests are always bright, and upon whose Golden Shore the radiant sunlight eternally and unflinchingly beams.

Of there is never a man so bad, and so celebrated writer, but some women love him and has faith in him.

Sowing and Reaping.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
BY HELEN HARCOURT.

PART FIRST.

"Oh, my son, my son, you are dragging me down to the grave!"

"Father! You talk like one without sense, money, or just as I do. I don't care for the stars I am rich, and am not tied to your apron strings! It will not do the least good to cry; I am old enough to take care of myself, and shall do so, too."

The speaker, as the reader will see, was gathered from their words, were mother and son.

The apartment in which they were seated was furnished with a luxuriance that bespoke the presence, not alone of wealth, but of what is more rare, a pure and exquisite taste.

A lady was a widow. The man (also: that such things can be) was her only son. By his wild course of profligacy during the four years which had elapsed since the law had given him possession of his large inheri-tance, Robert Baldwin had drawn heavy lines of care and sorrow upon his mother's face, and had whittened the hair which should still have been black as the raven's wing.

Heavily indeed had the hand of grief been laid upon her—grief of a kind more bitter, more incurable than that sorrow which is caused by death—for, although it leaves an aching void in the heart, it does not consume. Ah! there are living troubles which are far, far more poignant than those which are wrought by death!

Mrs. Baldwin had spoken but the truth: her son was dragging her down to the grave. "Time works wonders," but grief still greater, and so the once stately lady who had been the pride of the world and fashion, and admired and envied—had become a hopeless invalid—shutting herself out from society, and tirelessly seeking, by earnest prayer and the gentle powers of a mother's devotion, to bring her wayward son back within the in-fluence of reason and of right.

"Oh, Robert! Robert," she answered him, "you were not always thus. It is those wicked men who flatter you who have changed you. Oh! my son, I pray that you may never know what it is to have a child who is not true to his mother's love."

"There! that will do. I have heard enough of your cant. Since you will not let me have any peace, I will leave the house!"

And the angry man strode from the room, the violent shutting of the hall door a mo-ment later, proving that he had kept his word.

It is expedient that we accompany him, as with hurried steps he threads his way through the crowded streets of the city, and past a small, dingy brick building, by a narrow passage, and in a short time he is alone.

Baldwin, with his hands thrust in his pockets and whistling merrily, sauntered on again until they had disappeared in the distance.

Then he turned and hastily retraced his steps. A single rap, then an interval, fol-lowed by four more raps upon the door, each stroke clear and distinct, was the signal that obtained for him an unquestioned admis-sion into the gambling-house, for such in truth it was, though it bore no outward mark to distinguish it from the other dwellings in which were all occupied by honest, quiet people.

A slouching, half-intoxicated serving-man answered Baldwin's summons, and glancing at the visitor, pulled his hair in token of re-spect, then silently ushered the latter into a room, the apartment in the third story of the building.

Several tables, covered with green cloth, were scattered about the room, and seated at the one in the centre were four men deeply engaged in play.

They glanced up as Baldwin entered, greeted him with a nod, and in a short time he was seated at one of the tables.

"Hallo, Bob, just in the nick of time, old fellow. Sit down and take a hand," cried a young man, whose bloated face and blood-shot eyes testified to a life of dissipation.

"Come, seat yourself, Baldwin. Here is my place, and you may as well sit down, for you have nothing more to stake. In truth, we have had such a bad run of luck, Dick and I, that I am nearly bankrupt too. But it's a long tale that has no turning, so take Dick's place, Bob, and we will try to pay off these fellows before they ruin us."

"I would like to," Baldwin replied, "but I shall follow out of the room," he added, lowering his voice, "he's as hard to deal with as an old woman."

"What would you?" exclaimed his late partner, raising up as he spoke. "Thank you, Mr. Baldwin, and in return for your kind wish let me give you a warning: not you alone, but all. Look well to yourself! Beware, I say, for now I know you for what you are, a set of as great scoundrels as ever lived."

"I am not a scoundrel," Baldwin replied, his voice faltering, and a tear dimmed his eye, but forcing it back, he continued, "In a hard, ringing tone. "Will Baldwin, have a word to say to you. These men, who are greater scoundrels than yourself, are using you as a decoy to lead me to this accursed place, and to ruin them as they have ruined me. One word more—perhaps I do wrong to speak it—I go from hence directly to the police station. Back, back!" he shouted at the men he threatened rose to their feet, and made a movement as though to seize him.

"Back, on your part," he cried, drawing a pair of pistols from his pocket, the young man directed them towards the group. "Ah, you are amenable to reason, I see. And now I have no more to say, save that I shall take care to no more poison the faith of you, in this house at least."

With a stern, proud look upon his white face, Dick Martin turned from the room, and a moment afterwards was hasten-ing with a haggard, suffering face and unsteady steps, far away from the fatal table, where in a few short hours he had lost his all, nothing remained which he could call his own, save the next little dwelling in which he had sheltered his widowed mother, and young sister.

It is true, Richard Martin had never been rich, but he had been possessed of property sufficient to maintain him in comfort and independence.

But now! He turned his back upon the gambling-house, as many another erring brother has done, and he was no longer so long as the world shall last, with the bitter knowledge that years of unremitting toil would be his lot, ere he could hope to replace his mother and sister in the position of ease and comfort from which his folly, nay, his crime, had dragged them down.

But two short months before he had been a happy, light-hearted youth, of spotless in-tegrity.

But "a wolf" had crept into his con-science, seeking his friendship only that he might abuse it—"a false friend" it were then an open enemy, with an old sledge, and most bitterly was young Martin de-termined to experience the truth.

Cautionally, step by step, did Mr. Baldwin draw the veil upon his unsuspecting victim.

First he was persuaded to enter the "priv-ate" gambling house, "just for curiosity's sake, to look on awhile, and next, from being merely a spectator, he had been led on to take a hand, "only for this once, to make up the net."

And then was Dick Martin ensnared in the net so skillfully woven around him. Upon

the evening on which our tale opens, the gam-blers had resolved to cease "playing" for their victims, and instead, to administer "the coup de grace."

Every vile, every art was employed, and also: not in vain; for we have already wit-nessed the result.

A result which opened Dick Martin's eyes, and enabled him at last to behold in all their hideousness the artifices which he had been a willing dupe.

"And their leader," he murmured, as he rapidly paced the streets; "their leader is my cousin, the son of my mother's only brother! My mother, my poor mother. May God for-give me, even as I know she will!"

Repentant, remorseful, the unhappy young man turned his steps homeward, eager, yet dreading, to confess the sin and its con-sequences to his gentle mother, and to con-sult with her upon the best means to take with regard to their future.

His own property he had inherited from his uncle, and although his mother possessed some small property in her own right, the income derived from this source was barely sufficient to support herself alone, even with the strictest economy.

And now let us turn for a moment to the apartment in which sat Baldwin and his confederates.

"Well, Mr. Bradton!" exclaimed Baldwin, angrily, as Martin disappeared from their sight, "a fine trouble have you got me all into now! Why could you not play a little longer with my instead of making such a sudden sweep as to arouse his suspicions that I have not played fair? A sweep did I say? Forsooth, 'twas no sweep at all. He has a house left yet. You are a poor man-ager, Mr. Bradton, to say the best of you."

"Be careful, Baldwin, or—"

"Peace, peace," interrupted their com-panions; "would you stand here quar-reling until the police walk in on you? Peace! and let us take counsel, for we are not safe here another hour."

The consultation that followed was brief and earnest, and when the gamblers re-cessed, it did not close his eyes that night; thought was too busily at work to readily re-sign his empire, and ere morning dawned upon the world again, he had resolved to act upon his mother's suggestion, and that, too, without needless delay. For he was eager, painfully eager to begin his work of re-pu-tation, anxious to find himself in a situation where unremitting toil would assuredly enable him to support in comfort the dear ones whom his own sin had so nearly ruined.

He was eager to go to work, and not less eager to flee from the scene of his tempta-tion, and alas, of his fall.

Had news proverbially travels with light-nings speed, and Dick Martin was well aware that his change of fortune could not long be concealed from the many "butterfly friends" who having courted his society so long as the man shone upon his path, would now in his adversity treat him with neglect and scorn.

And Dick, in his remorseful humility, felt that he could not blame those who should turn their backs upon him, for, not fickle fortune, but his own sin, had darkened his path, and it was but just that he should suffer the penalty.

Did he live alone, were not other lives twined closely about his own, Dick Martin's pride would have urged him to remain in his native place, and by a steady, upright course, live down the reproach he had brought upon himself.

But he was not alone, and so casting aside all thoughts of self, and thinking only of his mother and sister and brother, he bent all his energies to the fulfillment of the plain duties that lay before him.

To remove westward was certainly the most feasible plan that could have been pro-posed; it promised comfort for the present, and competence for the future.

Mrs. Martin's property comprised several hundred acres of rich land. The greater por-tion of which had never been cultivated, while, in the midst of the fertile fields which had known the plow, stood a comfortable house, and a commodious barn.

The expenses of building would therefore have to be incurred, and for the neces-sary stock and farming implements the money to be obtained from the sale of the house the family then occupied, would be ample, even leaving a surplus with which to meet the smaller outlays which might be deemed unavoidable at the outset of their new life.

Leaving the mother and son to perfect their arrangements, it is expedient that we re-turn to Robert Baldwin, and note his pro-ceedings.

Almost at the self-same hour during which the police were engaged in their fruitless search of the deserted gambling house, the owner descended to the breakfast-room of his luxurious home, with unsteady steps and blood-shot eyes, the result of a night of dis-sipation.

His sorrowing mother gazed upon his shaking hands and uncertain movements in silence.

At length she spoke, venturing once more upon remonstrance, even though she knew but too well that its only result would be to draw down upon her the harsh anger of her only child.

"Robert, dear Robert, you are not well! Indeed, my son, the course of life you are pursuing must inevitably cut short your days."

"There, that will do," he interrupted. "I am tired of your never-ending creaking—I will have no more of it, do you hear, madame?"

And he struck his clenched hand heavily upon the table—careful, however, to turn his guilty face away—for, lost, depraved, as he was, conscience was not yet so com-pletely deadened, that he could utter such words, and yet meet his injured mother's gaze.

"Robert, my son, I tremble when I think of the possibility of death's coming to you suddenly. Think, my boy, what have you to plead at the Judgment seat of your outraged God? Oh! my son, my son!"

Her voice died away in a thrilling wail of grief, and Baldwin sprang from his chair, his features convulsed with passion.

"Did you understand me, when I said that I would have no more of this. Another such word, and one of us two shall leave this house; and I shall not be the one, madame! Do you hear this time?"

"Robert!" exclaimed his mother, "to your sense I must say that I do hear; I as-sure you to the last words I have to say to you, unless the day should come when you repent of your sin. I have striven, in vain, to win you back to the right—beneath my strive no more. God alone can touch your hardened heart. You threaten to turn me out of this house, but you belong not to you, but to me. This you must leave it—far I can bear your insults no longer."

She passed a moment, while her son, with swelling brow, stood before her in silent wonder at the new phases of his sister's character; she, whom he had held of his youth with love, whose whole comfort in life had seemed to centre in ministering to his wishes: she, his gentle mother, was now ex-hibiting a firmness and dignity of which he had deemed her incapable.

She continued with flushed cheeks and hard, stern voice, struggling sternly to con-quer the agony it cost her to utter such words, and her strength did not fail her: her son's heart was touched for an instant with remorse, as he felt that his mother had lost him out from her love, even as she had cast him out from her house.

"We can live together no longer, Robert. You are rich, you need no help from me, and

henceforth our paths must lie asunder; mine will be but a short one, the end of my journey, miserably draws near. Oh, Robert!" and the mother's voice grew softer, and a trifle less firm, "for the last time your mother warns you to repent ere it be too late. God will save you if you will but ask Him. Oh, my boy, my son, think of the eternal future it is for joy or woe as you yourself shall choose. And now farewell, you must go."

Then Mrs. Baldwin turned to leave the room, but ere she reached the door she looked back. There was no sorrow or re-pentance upon her son's face; anger, fierce, bitter anger was written there—that was all.

"Farewell, my son; oh! my poor boy, let us at least part as friends."

She extended her hand, but he stepped backwards, away from her.

"No, I will not play the hypocrite. You have turned me out of your house, and I will go without the least regret; on the con-trary, I rejoice that you have given me so good an excuse for leaving you."

He strode out of the apartment, and according to his own room, basted himself in packing the various articles that were scattered around.

This done, he proceeded down stairs and gave directions to one of the servants con-cerning his trunks.

"I am going to travel," he said, in reply to the man's wondering looks.

Nevertheless he had no such thought; his intention was to take up his quarters at a hotel which was kept by one of his maidens. He had been of late a frequent visitor at the house of a friend, and he had omitted to bring away from his mother's house a few bottles of rare and costly wine which he was not disposed to abandon to her use.

Returning, therefore, he for the last time, as he supposed, opened the hall door with his key and hurried up the stairs.

As he placed his foot on the first landing, he was suddenly confronted by the house-keeper, who with quick coming sob leaped from the room in which he had parted with his heart-broken mother.

"Oh, Mr. Robert," he gasped, "your mother, your poor mother! In there—"

"She wants to see me, does she?" he in-

